

THE STORY OF THE ROANOKE RAPIDS DISTRICT

A Story of Energy, Industry and Achievement. How Exhaustless Power and Far Seeing Capital Have Built in a Decade Three Industrial Centers with a Combined Population of Over Five Thousand Romance in Concrete Facts

A MANUFACTURING CENTER DESTINED TO GROW GREAT

By J. T. STAINBACK

One approaches the writing of the story of Roanoke Rapids and its immediately adjoining communities with a feeling of hopeless inadequacy -- understandable only to those who have seen the woods and farm lands of sixteen years ago transformed by the magic alchemy of capital and industry into the mills and streets and schools and churches of the largest manufacturing community of eastern North Carolina.

To those unacquainted with the marvelous changes wrought by the harnessing of the Roanoke and the placing of its resistless energy behind the myriad wheels of manufacture, the barest statement of facts is apt to sound like hyperbole -- and exaggeration is worse than useless.

It is attempted here to show more by pictures than description the different phases of the remarkable growth of this community -- the growth which has been gaining speed for the past five years and which bids fair to break all records for town development for many years to come. Views are shown of all of the big manufacturing plants and of many of the stores and business houses, but the stranger who contemplates coming here to live and work, may rest assured that we have more to offer than can be placed on paper. He will find a healthy and congenial climate, a friendly and energetic people. He will find co-operation cordial and complete in all measures for community betterment and he will find capital and labor mutually contented and prosperous.

Roanoke Rapids is a town without a past -- unless the strenuous labor and achievement of the last few years may be called a past. It is a town devoid of tradition, indifferent to social distinction. It is distinctly a modern town and individuals have none other than intrinsic values -- they are only for what they actually are; there is no leashed class, and the community has mighty little room for the loafer and the idler.

WATER POWER

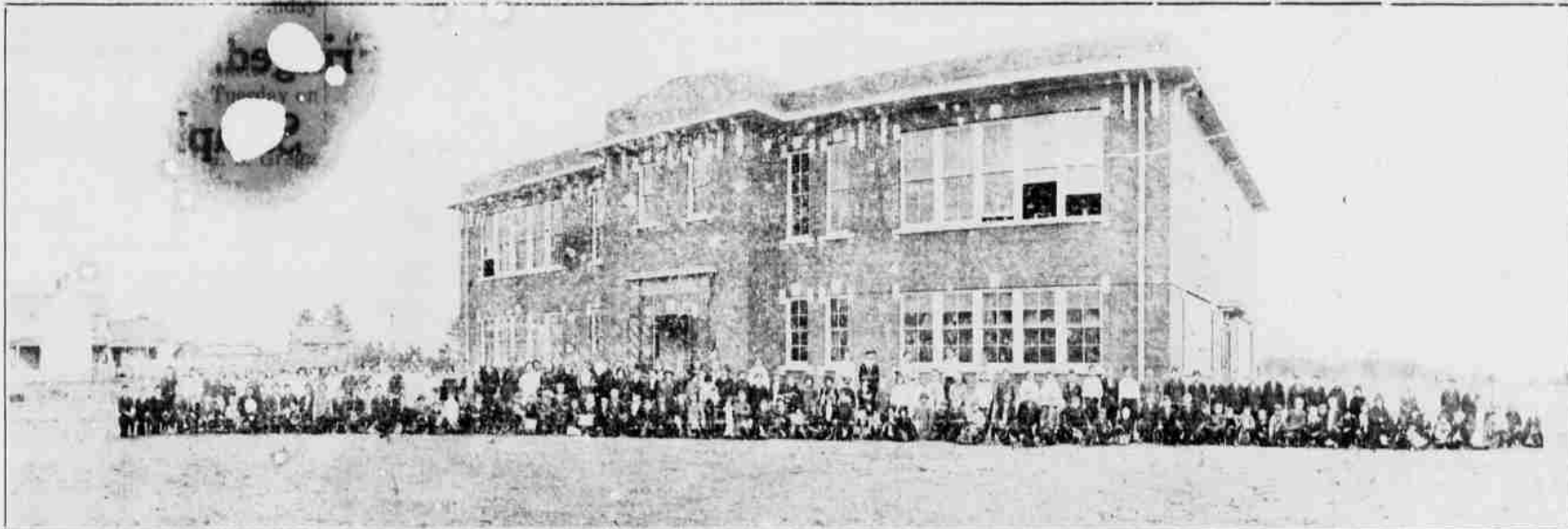
The first stroke of the woodsman's axe which was to clear the forest for the future town echoed through the pines in the year 1895. This was the beginning of the development of power from the rapids of the Roanoke river. The first development of power consisted merely of a series of crib dams connecting several large rapids and developing a limited amount of power. Today 12,000 horsepower is developed, and this is but a small percentage of the enormous energy dormant in the rapids of the muddy Roanoke. Senator Dawes, of Massachusetts, in a speech at Hoosac Valley, Mass., some years ago, speaks of the water



Central Schools and Auditorium - Roanoke Rapids Graded School District



Part of Business Block - Roanoke Avenue



Rosemary Primary Graded Schools - Roanoke Rapids Graded School District

power of Roanoke Rapids as "superior in every respect to that which to-day furnishes employment to 25,000 people at Holyoke, 40,000 at Lawrence, and 60,000 at Lowell."

CLIMATE

The climate of Roanoke Rapids is generally mild and delightful, the winters, while reasonably severe for the latitude, permit the fullest measure of out-of-door recreation and the summers are very temperate. The mean temperature of Roanoke Rapids, five year average, varies only from 36.4 in January, the coldest month, to 78.3 in July, the warmest month. The rain-fall is both regular and ample, the average rain-fall in inches for five years being 11.66 in winter, 8.21 in spring, 12.63 in summer, 7.56 in fall. The landscape is rolling and the soil very fertile, and of a character peculiarly adapted to the truck farming made possible by the mild and uniform climatic conditions.

LOCATION

The community is located on the Seaboard Air Line Railway and is almost equidistant (about 80 miles) from Richmond, Norfolk and Raleigh. It is situated in the extreme northeastern corner of Halifax county facing the upper end of Northampton county across the Roanoke River. The community draws trade from both Halifax and Northampton counties, being connected with Northampton by a series of steel bridges and improved roads. The roads leading into the community from Halifax county are excellent. Practically all of them are gravel-surfaced, graded and drained and in splendid condition every day in the year. The roads in Roanoke Rapids Township receiving the especial attention of Mr. Jno. L. Patterson, good roads enthusiast and Chairman of the County Good Roads Commission, are models of scientific road construction.

AREA AND POPULATION

The community is spread over over an area about three quarters of a mile wide and nearly two miles long. Although becoming more closely connected every day, the community is divided into three groups, consisting of the town and postoffice of Roanoke Rapids, the postoffice of Rosemary and the village at the Patterson Mills. The gaps between these three settlements have closed up to such

an extent during the past two years that the division is now more arbitrary than actual. The postoffices of Rosemary and Roanoke Rapids are 1.1 miles apart, the Patterson Mills village lying between, but slightly to the east of Roanoke Avenue, which is the community's main artery of travel.

The population of the community is about 5300, that of Roanoke Rapids proper being 2500, Rosemary 1800, Patterson Mills Village 1,000.

MANUFACTURING ENTERPRISES

The manufacturing establishments of the community consist of five cotton mills and two paper mills. The Halifax Paper Corporation are among the largest

manufacturers of Kraft wrapping paper in the United States, and the Rosemary Manufacturing Company, who operate three mills, are the largest manufacturers of mercerized cotton damask in the world. The Patterson Mills Company manufacture fancy dress gingham, and the Roanoke Mills Company manufacture flannels, outings and towels of enormous scale. The Roanoke Fibre Board Company manufacture wood pulp and container box boards.

The consumption of cotton in Roanoke Rapids Township last year was in round figures twenty thousand bales. The total cotton production of Halifax County is thirty thousand bales. The investment in manufacturing enterprises in this community is in excess of five millions of dollars. The total yearly payroll of these industries is more than eight hundred thousand dollars.

BUSINESS HOUSES

There are forty three brick store buildings in the community and probably twenty frame store buildings. There are five large department stores, two drug stores, and two banks. The merchants and business men are energetic, progressive, and efficient. The stores are modern in methods and equipment, complete lines of every kind of merchandise are stocked and there is competition enough to insure the most reasonable prices.

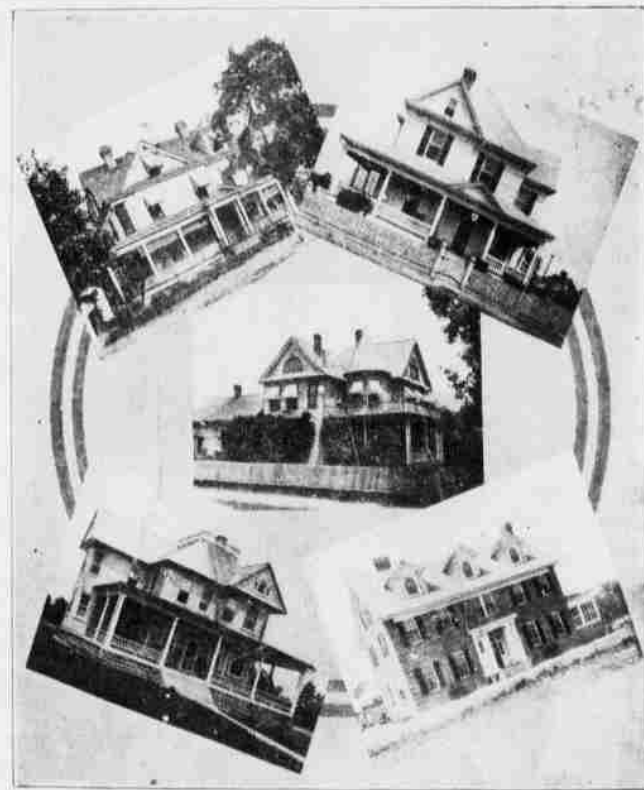
EDUCATION

Progressive along all lines, progress is especially marked in educational facilities. The total investment in the Roanoke Rapids Graded School District is more than \$50,000.00. This investment consists of three school buildings, two for white children and one colored school. Views of both of the white school buildings are shown on the first page of this issue. The Central School are located between Roanoke Rapids and Rosemary and are attended by the junior classes from Roanoke Rapids proper and senior classes from the entire district. The Central School Building was erected at a cost of

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Some Roanoke Rapids Residences



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